

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SACLANT'S ARTICLE IN "NATO REVIEW"

THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF SACLANT'S ARTICLE FROM THE DECEMBER
EDITION OF THE "NATO REVIEW" TITLED: "NATO STRATEGY AND THE
NEW DIMENSION AT SEA."
BEGIN TEXT:

IT IS, I BELIEVE, NOW GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE LATE 1960'S
AND EARLY 1970'S HAVE SEEN THE ARRIVAL OF A MAJOR NEW
DIMENSION IN SOVIET MILITARY CAPABILITY - NAMELY SIGNIFI-
CANT GLOBAL SEA POWER. WHILE THE ADVENT OF THE CAPABILITY IS
WIDELY RECOGNIZED, LESS ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE
OPTIONS WHICH THAT CAPABILITY HAS OPENED TO THE SOVIET
POLITICO-MIITARY PLANNERS. INDEED, IN THE SAME PERIOD,
NATO'S MILITARY POSTURE AND STRATEGIC THINKING HAS REMAINED
ALMOST TOTALLY OIENED TOWARDS DEFENDING THE ALLIANCE FROM
MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE MAINLAND OF EUROPE, WITH OUR MARITIME
FORCES IN A SUPPORTING ROLE. IN ADDITION TO SHEER NUMBERS
OF WARSHIPS THERE ARE SEVERAL ELEMENTS THAT CAN BE IDENTIFIED
AS THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SOVIET SEAPOWER. FIRSTLY, THERE HAS
BEEN A DRAMATIC QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOVIET NAVY.
LONG RANGE NUCLEAR SUBMARINES HAVE REPLACED CONVENTIONAL
SUBMARINES OF LIMITED CAPABILITY, AND MODERN MISSILE EQUIPPED
SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT CONTAINING SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONICS HAVE
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BEEN INTRODUCED. SECONDLY, THEY HAVE DEVELOPED AN UP-TO-DATE,
NUCLEAR POWERED, STRATEGIC MISSILE SUBMARINE FORCE, CAPABLE
OF THREATENING THE ALLIANCE FROM ANY OF THE WORLD'S PRINCIPAL
OCEANS. THIRDLY, THEY HAVE EXPANDED THEIR SHIPBUILDING CAPABILITY

IN A TRULY REMARKABLE MANNER. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY NOW HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BUILD NUCLEAR SUBMARINES AT A FASTER RATE THAN THE ALLIANCE. FORTHLY, THEIR MERCHANT FLEET, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THEIR NAVY, IS NOW THE FIFTHLARGEST IN THE WORLD, IS IS CONTINUALLY OFFERING TO UNDERCUT THE TRADITIONAL MARITIME CARRIERS ON THE WORLD'S TRADE ROUTES. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS COMPLEMENTED BY A WELL-EQUIPPED FISHING FLEET AND WORLD-WIDE OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH EFFORT. FINALLY, AND PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT OF ALL, THEY HAVE TAKEN, AND ARE CONTINUING TO TAKE, THE NECESSARY STEPS TO OVERCOME THE GEOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS WHICH HAMPER THE EXERCISE OF THEIR MARITIME POWER. SUCH STEPS INCLUDE A WORLD-WIDE RECONNAISSANCE COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM, INCREASED EMPHASIS ONAFLOAT SUPPORT TOGETHER WITH THE ACQUISITION OF BASES BASE RIGHTS OVERSEAS, AND A TRAINING EFFORT WHICH PLACES INCREASING EMPHASIS ON WORLD-WIDE OPERATIONS AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE OKEAN EXERCISES, PARTICULARLY THAT HELD IN 1975.

BALNCE OF POWER AFFECTED

IN THE 1950'S ANDEARLY 1960'S WHEN NATO'S DEFENCE POSTURE AND STRATEGY WERE ESTABLISHED, THESE SOVIET CAPABILITIES DID NOT EXIST IN NEARLY SUCH A SIGNIFICANTDEGREE AND THE NATO NAVIES WERE LARGER, BOTH RELATIVELY AND ACTUALLY. HOW THEN HAS THIS NEW DIMENSION OF SOVIET MARITIME CAPABILITY AFFECTED THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE WARSAW PACT AND NATO, AND WHAT NEW OPTIONS DOES IT MAKE AVAILABLE TO SOVIET POLITICO-MILITARY PLANNERS? NATO'S STRATEGY DEPENDSFIRST ON DETERRENCE AND, FAILING THAT, ON A GRADUATED RESPONSE THAT WOULD FORCE THE ENEMY TO FACE ESCALATION IF HE SHOULD ATTEMPT ANY MILITARY ADVENTURE IN THE NATO AREA. IN TIMES GONE BY, NATO HAD A CLEAR CUT ABILITY TO DETER MARITIME MILITARY ADVENTURES BY THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE CLEARLY DEMONSTRABLE DETERRENT CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE NATO LAND FORCES WITH REINFORCEMENTTOGETHER WITH SUPPORT OVER AND FROM THE SEA. THE PREPONDERANCE OF ALLIED SEAPOWER WAS SUCH THAT IT LIMITED SOVIET MILITARY OPTIONS TO AGRESSION ON THE MAINLAND OF EUROPE (PREFERABLY AWAY FROM THE FLANKS). THIS FORCED ACCEPTANCE OF THE REALIZATION THAT SUCH AGRESSION, IF CARRIED OUT, WOULD HAVE TO BE SHORT, STRONG AND SWIFT, UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH THE ATTENDANT RISK OF STEPPING OVER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, OTHERWISE IT COULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION BEFORE NATO'S MARITIME CAPBILITY BROUGHT RESUPPLY AND REINFORCEMENTS ROLLING IN. AS DIRECT CONFRONATION IN EROPE, WITH ALL THE RISKS THIS ENTAILED, WAS UNATTRACTIVE, WITH ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE (ACE) FACING HER ON LAND AND THE SEA LARGELY DENIED TO HER, THE SOVIET UNION TURNED LOGICALLY TO THE BUILDING OF A STRONG NAVY TO OPEN UP NEW OPTIONS. WHAT ARE THESE NEW OPTIONS AND WHAT ARE THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE? IN THE EUROPEAN THEATRE, SEAPOWER HAS OPENED AT LEAST TWO NEW VISTAS TO THE SOVIET PLANNERS. FIRSTLY, IT HAS CONSIDERABLY INCREASED THE VULNERABILITY OF NATO'S FLANKS. TO SOVIET MINDS THE FEASIBILITY OF AT LEAST TEMPORARILY ISOLATING SOME PART

OF THE FLANKS BY, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THE CONCENTRATION OF MASSIVE POWER MAY NOW BE A STRATEGY WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION. SUCH A STRATEGY MIGHT HAVE LIMITED OBJECTIVES SUCH AS THE SEIZURE OF ADDITIONAL BASES AND ICE-FREE PORTS IN THE NORTH OR FREEING ACCESS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE SOUTH. SECONDLY, IT HAS INCREASED THE VULNERABILITY OF LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS OVER WHICH THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE'S REINFORCEMENTS AND RESUPPLY MUST COME. THUS THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND MUST SURELY ENJOY A GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND CONFIDENCE AS THEY CONTEMPLATE THE SLOWING AND CONSTRICTION OF ALLIED REINFORCEMENTS. SUCH CONSIDERATIONS MUST BECOME INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE IN SOVIET MINDS IF THE BALANCE OF POWER AT SEA SHOULD CONTINUE TO MOVE IN THEIR FAVOUR. HOWEVER, IT IS OUR FIRM OPINION THAT WE STILL RETAIN SUFFICIENT MARITIME CAPABILITY TO CHALLENGE SUCH MAJOR ADVENTURES AT SEA AND TO FACE OUR POTENTIAL OPPONENTS WITH HEAVY AND PROBABLY UNACCEPTABLE RISKS.

NEW HORIZONS FOR SOVIET PLANNERS

HOWEVER, IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE GLOBAL ASPECTS OF SEAPOWER THAT HAVE OPENED UP COMPLETELY NEW HORIZONS TO THE SOVIET POLITICO-MILITARY PLANNERS. WE LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD. THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS DEPEND TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE DEVELOPING NATIONS FOR RAW MATERIALS, WHILE, SIMILARLY, THE DEVELOPING NATIONS DEPEND ON THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS FOR THE CAPITAL GOODS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO EXTRACT THEIR RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOP FURTHER. THE FLOW OF THIS TRADE, THE MAJOR PART OF WHICH MOVES BY SEA, IS THE LIFELOOD OF NATIONS AND THE NATO COUNTRIES ARE NO EXCEPTION. WELL ESTABLISHED EXAMPLES ABOUND. NINETY-SEVEN PCT OF WESTERN EUROPE'S AND THIRTY-THREE UNCLASSIFIED

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PCT OF NORTH AMERICA'S OIL COMES FROM OVERSEAS. NINETY-SIX PCT OF THE WORLD'S CHROME AND THIRTEEN PCT OF THE COPPER LIES IN AFRICA AND IS EXPORTED TO THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS BY SEA. AT THE SAME TIME, NORTH AMERICA EXPORTS ABOUT \$8.9 BILLION OF MANUFACTURED GOODS EVERY MONTH WHILE THE FIGURE FOR WESTERN EUROPE IS ABOUT \$30 BILLION. ANY INTERFERENCE WITH SOURCES OF RAW MATERIAL OR THE FLOW OF TRADE CAN QUICKLY CAUSE MAJOR DISLOCATION - A DISLOCATION FELT MORE ACUTELY IN THE SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRIAL NATIONS WITH HIGH STANDARDS OF LIVING THAN IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IT IS THIS NETWORK OF TRADE WHICH TODAY MORE THAN EVER REPRESENTS THE SOFT UNDERBELLY OF NATO. IT OFFERS TO THE SOVIET UNION A WAY AROUND THE DEADLOCK IN EUROPE BECAUSE, IF OUR SOURCES OF RAW MATERIAL OR OUR SEA LINES OF TRADE CAN BE DOMINATED OR EVEN INFLUENCED BY SOVIET POWER THEN, TO AN EXTENT, THE LIFELOOD OF THE NATO NATIONS WILL BE IN THE HANDS OF A POTENTIAL ENEMY. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS VULNERABLE JUGULAR IS NOT NEW. IT HAS BEEN THERE SINCE LONG BEFORE NATO WAS FORMED. HOWEVER, AS MUCH OF IT LIES WELL OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA, IT HAS BECOME EXPOSED TO AN INCREASED THREAT BY THE SOVIET UNION'S ACQUISITION OF GLOBAL SEAPOWER. GLOBAL SEAPOWER HAS GIVEN THE SOVIET UNION THE ABILITY TO INTERDICT

OR PRESSURE INTERNATIONAL TRADE AT POINTS WELL OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA. IN PEACETIME, THE SOVIETS CAN USE THEIR CENTRALLY CONTROLLED MERCHANT FLEET UNDERCUT WORLD FREIGHT RATES THUS INFLUENCING OTHER NATIONS TO CUT BACK ON THE USE OF THEIR OWN MERCHANT FLEETS AND TO PLACE ALLIANCE CARGOES UNDER SOVIET CONTROL. AGAIN, IN TIMES OF PEACE THERE NOW EXISTS THE ABILITY TO PROJECT A SOVIET NATIONAL PRESENCE ABROAD - TO "SHOW THE FLAG" IN PORTS ONCE DOMINATED BY THE ALLIES. IN TIMES OF TENSION OR CONFLICT, WITH OR WITHOUT WAR, THIS MARTIME CAPABILITY CAN PROJECT POWER OVERSEAS, TO SUPPORT INSURRECTIONS, AND TO PROVIDE MILITARY SUPPORT TO POLITICAL PRESSURE IN COUNTRIES THAT PROVIDE VITAL RESOURCES TO NATIONS OF THE ALLIANCE. IN TIME OF WAR, SOVIET NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINES COULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST VITAL OIL AND TRADE ROUTES OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA.

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WESTERN CAPABILITIES CUT BACK
WHILE THE SOVIET UNION HAS DEVELOPED, AND WHAT IS MORE IS PUTTING INTO PRACTICE, THIS WORLD-WIDE MARITIME CAPABILITY WITH CLEAR AND OBVIOUS DANGERS TO THE ALLIANCE, NATO ON THE OTHER HAND HAS NOT CHANGED THE POSTURE IT ORIGINALLY ADOPTED AT A TIME WHEN THE SOVIET UNION DID NOT POSSESS SUCH A CAPABILITY. INDEED, WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE EUROPEAN NATO COUNTRIES FROM AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, EVEN THE UNILATERAL CAPABILITIES OF NATO NATIONS IN AREAS OUTSIDE NATO HAVE BEEN DRAMATICALLY CUT BACK. IT IS NOT TOO EXTREME TO SAY WE HAVE NOW REACHED A POSITION WHERE A MARITIME THREAT TO NATO IS BEING POSED IN AREAS WHERE NATO HAS LITTLE OR NO PRESENCE OR CAPABILITY. NATO DETERRENCE IN THESE AREAS IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT. ONLY THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE AND OCCASIONALLY THE UNITED KINGDOM CONTINUE TO DEPLOY FORCES OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE; AND EVEN THESE DEPLOYMENTS ARE OF NECESSITY FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. AT THE SAME TIME OUR DEPENDENCE ON THESE AREAS HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER, NOT ONLY FOR OUR SURVIVAL, BUT ALSO AS THE ROUTE THROUGH WHICH

WE TRADE AND THUS ESTABLISH MUTUAL INTERESTS WITH
MUCH OF THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THE CONVENTIONAL MARITIME FORCES OF THE ALLIANCE
ARE A MAJOR FACTOR IN OUR DETERRENT POSTURE. THESE
FORCES MUST BE USED EFFECTIVELY AND FULL ADVANTAGE
TAKEN OF THEIR FLEXIBILITY. THIS MEANS ADJUSTING OUR
STRATEGY TO MEET ANY THREAT TO OUR WELLBEING
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WHATEVER LOCATION THAT MIGHT BE, WHETHER INSIDE OR
OUTSIDE THE EXISTING NATO AREA. THIS IS NOT TO SAY
THAT THE DETERRENT VALUE OF OUR CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE
TIMELY REINFORCEMENT AND RESUPPLY TO NATO
EUROPE IS ANY LESS IMPORTANT, BUT RATHER THAT THE
NEED FOR A NEW DIMENSION TO OUR STRATEGY HAS BEEN
ADDED BY SOVIET MARITIME EXPANSION. THE SOVIET
UNION IS CAPITALIZING ON OUR RELUCTANCE TO EXTEND
OUR AREA OF CONCERN AND IS MOUNTING A THREAT WHICH
COULD UNDERMINE AND OUT-FLANK OUR FORCES IN
EUROPE.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT? CERTAINLY, SOME
INCREASE IN NEW SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IS NEEDED.
NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT TO NATO AS WELL AS THE
BLOC. THE SOVIET NAVAL HIGH COMMAND ARE NOT
MAGICIANS; AND WHEN THEY DEPLOY FORCES TO SUCH
AREAS AS THE INDIAN OCEAN OR SOUTH ATLANTIC THEIR
FORCES IN THE NATO AREA AND ELSEWHERE ARE THAT
MUCH REDUCED. THEIR SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME MAY
HAVE PEAKED. HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS' EXISTING
SHIPBUILDING CAPACITY REMAINS WORRISOME. IN THE
SHORT TERM OUR PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH ONE OF
PROVIDING MORE IMMEDIATELY, BUT RATHER OF USING
WHAT WE HAVE MORE FLEXIBLY UNTIL THE NATO
COUNTRIES TOTAL NUMBERS OF PLATFORMS AND AIRCRAFT
REACH PROGRAMMED LEVELS. FORTUNATELY, MARITIME
FORCES ARE INHERENTLY FLEXIBLE. TO AN EXTENT, MUCH OF
WHAT WE NEED IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE.

WE MUST BEGIN WITH A WHOLE-HEARTED ACCEP-
TANCE THAT ALLIANCE INTERESTS ARE BEING THREATENED
OUTSIDE AS WELL AS WITHIN NATO BOUNDARIES. THIS
DOES NOT MEAN THAT A CONSTANT PRESENCE IS REQUIRED
OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA, BUT RATHER THAT, AS AN
ALLIANCE, WE NEED TO DEVELOP THE CAPABILITY TO
OPERATE IN OTHER AREAS, AND TO BE PREPARED TO
DEMONSTRATE IT.

OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE, AND IN ORDER TO SUPPORT
THESE DEPLOYMENTS, WE MUST LOOK AT THE NEEDS OF
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LOGISTIC SUPPORT. SUCH SUPPORT WILL REQUIRE A NUMBER OF SUPPLY UNITS, SOME OF WHICH WILL FLOAT AND SOME OF WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE TO THE ALLIANCE. ASHORE, WE SHALL NEED LOGISTIC BASES FROM WHICH THE AFLOAT SUPPORT CAN REPLENISH AND AT WHICH WE CAN POSITION COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AND AIRFIELDS. THE THOUGHT OF NATO BASES OUTSIDE THE EXISTING NATO AREA HAS UNDERSTANDABLY BEEN A DIFFICULT SUBJECT FOR NATO'S POLITICAL LEADERS; BUT WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT WE CAN PROBABLY MANAGE WITH THE ISLANDS WHICH ALREADY EXIST UNDER THE CONTROL OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE IT MAY BE THAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE SEEN TO BE WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF POLITICAL REALITY.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT A START SHOULD BE MADE; THAT NATO SHOULD SHOW A VISIBLE AND DEMONSTRABLE AWARENESS OF THE THREAT TO THOSE OF ITS VITAL INTERESTS WHICH LIE OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA, AND THAT NATO COMMANDERS' SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT SHOULD FROM TIME TO TIME BE OPERATED WITH VISIBILITY OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA.

THERE IS NO DOUBT AT ALL THAT A NEW DIMENSION HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE THREAT AND THAT EMPHASIS IS BEING PLACED ON USING PART OF IT IN AREAS WHERE OUR INTERESTS ARE CRUCIAL AND EXPOSED, AND WHERE OUR CURRENT MILITARY CAPABILITY IS LIMITED.
END TEXTSTRAUSZ-HUPE

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